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Steep Trail

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project:

STEEP TRAIL

Portfolio submission ref 2014

This project addresses the legacy of *John Muir (1838-1914)* and his relevance to contemporary Scottish and Chinese culture. Live environmental issues and the interface in understanding between disciplines through historical precedent and current Scottish culture is examined in terms of a globalist culture through international collaboration. **This project 'makes diverse links and networks across Scotland... increases collaborative working, artist development, new international relationships and involves cross sector research and distribution of ideas'** Stephen Palmer, Creative Scotland 2011

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

This project has an ambitious research theme, it expands research contacts and eca profile internationally, it provides external research funding. It will increase pedagogic research activity and reflective practice in order to link the research and teaching components of Polarcap's work (Liz Adamson and Graeme Todd), creating further links between learning and teaching.

The project promotes discussion and knowledge transfer between the visual arts and the sciences with the objective of achieving an enhanced understanding of the issues involved in climate change and global warming and how best to promote this thinking to both an academic and non academic audience, with the primary aim of raising awareness through open and informed debate of this prescient issue.

Scientific research on this subject is necessarily based on statistical probability and this research provides a basis for creative speculation and interpretation from the participating artists; through Polarcap's mediation these polar binaries will form a 'dialogue loop' that is being used to present a clearer case for interpretation with regard to wider understanding.



The main benefits of the Steep Trail project to involved participants and the University are that in the short term connections have been made and strengthened principally between the areas of Art and Science. The shared concerns of both communities in the areas of climate change, global warming and environmentalism is a forum for discussion and cross-fertilization of ideas, concerns and approaches in the short term, leading to the formation of mutual strategy in the longer term.

Discussions so far have indicated that there are mutual benefits in terms of articulating and promoting understanding of Climate Change and bringing this to public notice in a way that is informed, understandable and engaging to a wider community as well as within the academic community.

Participation and promotion of this 'third way' thinking about climate change will place the University at the forefront of discourse on this interface and provide an innovative opportunity for further development in terms of both curriculum and research.

The Steep Trail Team

The participating organizations and their key contacts will each play their role in the development of Steep Trail knowledge transfer outcomes/ benefits: the scientists as advisors and participants

Liz Adamson, project author and lead project manager

Irene Kernan, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop, project partner

Diana Sykes Fife Contemporary Arts & Crafts, project partner

Graeme Todd, lead artist on the exchange programme, Shanghai

Jonathan Owen, artist on the exchange programme, Shanghai

Wang Xieda, James Cohan Gallery, Shanghai, artist on the exchange programme, Edinburgh

Rania Ho, Arrow Factory, Beijing, artist on the exchange programme, Edinburgh

Lui Ying Mei curator, I40sqm gallery, co-ordinator of residency in Shanghai

Xing Zhao and Arthur Solway, James Cohan Gallery,

Dr Gabi Hegeri, Professor Dept GeoSciences member of The Climate Change Network at Edinburgh University,

Dr Mark Huxham, Marine Biologist Napier University

Jo Moulin, Manager of John Muir's Birthplace to participate and advise on John Muir;

Lesley Smith, Principal Arts Officer, East Lothian Council, funder and Conference host;

Creative Scotland, funder, China Consortium Grant Award

UoE funder, Internal Grant and Knowledge Exchange Grant Award

I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out I found was really going in. JOHN MUIR

Fig 2



In April 2011 ECA Lecturers Liz Adamson and Graeme Todd established a basecamp (project headquarters) in Muir's birthplace of Dunbar – literally and metaphorically tramping out the miles with ground research, workshops and discussion. Working alongside their principal partners Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop and Fife Contemporary Arts and Craft to establish art/eco labs across the East Coast of Scotland during 2012 finally embarking on a journey following Muir's footsteps from the East Coast of Scotland to Shanghai, China



Figure 1 Shanghai 1990 and Shanghai 2010 John Muir visited Shanghai on a visit to China to research Asian Forestry 1903 Creative Scotland's China Consortium visit in 2010. Steep Trail Artists visit in 2012.

Fig 2 & 3 art/eco lab in John Muir Park and at Basecamp

BASE CAMP
West Barns Studios
East Lothian



participants art/eco lab: basecamp

Prof. Mark Huxham: Professor in Teaching and Research in Marine Biology, Edinburgh Napier University.

Sarah Madden: Dept Psychology. Open University

Professor Gabi Hegerl: Climatologist, Dept of Geosciences, Edinburgh University

Jon Owen: artist, lecturer eca, University of Edinburgh

Dee Davison: Consultant and Marine Biologist, one of the founders of Dynamic Earth

Susan Mowatt: artist, lecturer, eca University of Edinburgh

Morag Haddow: Sustaining Dunbar

Mike Windle: artist, lecturer, eca,, University of Edinburgh

Chris Fremantle, eco/art/Scotland and Research Fellow Grays School of Art

Jo Moulin : Manager John Muir Birthplace

Liz Adamson and Graeme Todd: Polarcap, contemporary art projects, lecturers eca, UoE, and artists

Feedback from Creative Scotland on receipt of successful funding bid

Steep Trail offers a good contribution to

International activity within Scotland's visual arts sector-making links to a diverse audience of public, peers and professionals from other sectors. The proposal seems well developed and offers strong partnerships with the potential of longer-term exchange as well as with access points for the wider sector, which could create further legacies.

Steep Trail is an ambitious project making diverse links and networks across Scotland.

3 year timescale offers good research, thinking, development and production time

Thematically relevant (the theme is of wide interest) Rural/urban relevance and activity=strong. Potential outcomes are good. Increased collaborative working with potential of further relationship building.

Artist development

New International relationships

Cross sector research and distribution of ideas

Stephen Palmer
 Visual Arts Officer
 Creative Scotland

Figure 4 West Barns Studios

Project Space used for Basecamp and for Masters of Contemporary Art 's project relating to Steep Trail: Doctrine of Signatures These studios were renovated by West Barns Arts (Liz Adamson, Graeme Todd and Susan Mowatt.)

Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop



Figure 5
Participants during day
one walk in John Muir
Grove, Royal Botanics of
Edinburgh

Art/eco lab Edinburgh
2nd and 3rd July
2 day event at Edinburgh
Sculpture Workshop

Science/Strategy
Ben Twist : Theatre Director,
Arts Manager, carbon
manager, climate change
communicator
Dr Stephan Matthiesen, Dept
Of GeoSciences, UoE
Julia Malle ASCUS
Emily Dodd Greenerleith
Chris Fremantle
art/eco/Scotland, Research
Fellow Grays School of Art ,
Aberdeen and Duncan of
Jordanstone, Dundee

Artists
Rocca Gutteridge
Andrea Geile
Emma Herman-Smith
Natalie Taylor
Ettie Spencer
Jonathan Owen
Polarcap
Mike Windle

Edinburgh Sculpture
Workshop
Irene Kernan



Figure 6 &7
Images from
The Ecology
Centre, Fife
Day 1

EC
A&C



Fife art/eco lab 9th and 10th August 2011

Day 1 **The Ecology Centre** Day 2 **The Centre for Stewardship, Falkland**
Diana Sykes FCA&C

Graeme Todd & Liz Adamson Polarcap, ECA, University of Edinburgh

Dr Stephanie Bunn lecturer anthropology University of St Andrews

Alex Gnanapragasam PhD student University of St Andrews

Peter Lindlow Scotland China Association

Rachel McCrum PhD student University of St Andrews

Dr David Munro, Historical Geographer

Alistair Rider lecturer in 20th century art history, University of St Andrews

Ninian Stuart, Centre of Stewardship, Falkland

Dr Rehema White Director Masters Prog in Sustainable Development,
University of St Andrews

**Artists: Marion Smith, Lorna McIntosh, Kate Foster, Valerie Dempsey &
Ronald Boer, Jo Bletcher, Jonathan Baxter**

Steep Trail
New China/Scotland
Residency Exchange
Programme.
2012

Project managed & Co-ordinated by
Liz Adamson, Polarcap, lecturer ECA,
UoE and
Liu Ying Mei, curator and owner of
140sq metre Gallery, Shanghai

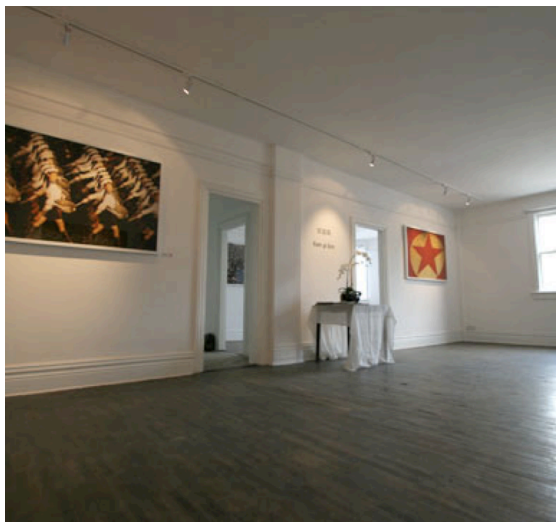
Artists

Wang Xieda represented by James
Cohan Gallery, Shanghai and New York

Rania Ho, represented by Arrow
Factory, Beijing

Graeme Todd, represented by
Mummery and Schnelle, London

Jonathan Owen, represented by
Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh



140 Square Metre Gallery, Shanghai

JAMES COHAN GALLERY, SHANGHAI

The Chinese artists took residency in the new premises at ESW. Wang Xieda for the month of July and Rania Ho, the month of August. They made connections with artists, galleries, cultural institutions and students on the Masters of Contemporary Art Programme at ECA, UoE. They visited the John Muir Park, and Polarcap's basecamp with a view to making work for exhibitions responding to Steep Trail project. These exhibitions are scheduled for Spring 2013 in Shanghai and Scotland. Graeme Todd and Jonathan Owen are currently in Shanghai. They will make similar connections, introduce the ideas of art/eco labs and make research in response to Steep Trail project